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13 November 1973

POSITION ON PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

1. The purpose of this paper is a) to indicate agreement in principle with an OTS recommendation that a two-fold approach be used in the study of parapsychological phenomena; and b) to elaborate what some of the elements might be that fall into each aspect of the proposed program. Though two separate aspects of the approach are described, it is important to remember that the two classes of studies must coalesce if more than anecdotal or testimonial evidence is to emerge.

2. Basic Research Aspect - The goal is to find, if possible, the underlying mechanism of "giftedness" or to at least identify areas of communality between "gifted" subjects so that they can be sufficiently characterized to formulate a "profile" or incipient screening system. To accomplish this the following elements should be included in the program:

a. Sensory Evaluation - The classical sensory pathways in the "gifted" (and matched control) subjects must be studied. Testing must go beyond the "normal" range and include discriminatory measures as well as threshold evaluations for each modality and include some testing (with barriers interposed) focussed on the "special" abilities of the subject.

b. Nervous System Characterization - Autonomic Nervous System (heart rate, GSR, plethysmograph) and Central Nervous System (averaged evoked potential, contingent negative variation, spectral analysis) will be characterized in terms of 1) baseline levels, 2) response proclivities to liminal and subliminal stimuli, and 3) response to stimulus anticipation (AEP, CNV, spectral analysis) and conditionability.

c. Psychological Testing - A battery of aptitude and personality tests will be given. A BAB psychologist will conduct an independent PAS evaluation.

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Position on Parapsychological Research (Cont'd)

d. In-depth Interview and General History - This task will focus on special abilities as perceived and manifested by the "gifted" person.

e. Behavioral Assessment - Subjects will be tested using the "assessor" tapes, "observer" movies, tachistoscopic detection, reaction time, field dependency, time estimates, and other measures so as to relate the results from the "gifted" subjects to larger populations.

These classes of data were chosen not only because they are logical in terms of the specific problem but because the data may have some applicability to other on-going ORD problems. It is hoped a "profile" for a "sensitive" may emerge.

3. Intelligence Objective Aspect - OTS will provide the guidance concerning the specific objectives. OTS and ORD can collaborate in determining the protocol for conducting the tasks and collecting data. A generic problem that should be solved first is the determination of a criterion for success (on a trial-by-trial basis) or the establishment of a scale (ordinal) and rules for its use (reliability) to accommodate "partial hits." It is expected that whatever specific "operational tasks" are chosen, basic information in the following categories will be necessary.

- a. Reliability (Repeatibility)
- b. Validity (Accuracy)
- c. Resolution (Channel Capacity by Sensory Modality)
- d. Potential for Enhancement (Learnability)
- e. Limiting Factors (Force Fields, Feedback, Magnetic Shielding, and Familiarity)

Depending on the types of tasks, CNS and ANS data will be collected during task performance. Matched control subjects will be run on all classes of tasks. In addition, subjects will undergo a medical examination including blood chemistry and X-ray screening; appropriate physical security measures will be incorporated into all tasks.

4. A program that encompasses the type of approach and rigor outlined above has a chance of providing "good" data (whether the overall results are positive or negative) and should be undertaken.

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM:

Life Sciences Research, ORD
716 Ames

SG11

EXTENSION

3191

NO.

DATE

14 November 1973

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

C/LSR/ORD

Hof

N

2.

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This report does not address the mechanism of OTS/ORD collaboration in terms of cost or contractual responsibility. Nor does this report explicitly address the SRI proposal or the timing. These are seen as administrative/political issues and should be handled separately, but they should be handled and not rationalized away by the desire to collaborate on something potentially exciting.

1 → 2, 3
Our position on the SRI proposal, which is concurred in by the OSI psychologist foundation with the proposal, is that the tasking therein is much too loose. LSR/ORD feels that it is important to move ahead in this area but we have reservations about proceeding with the present proposal, especially under OTS mentorship.